



European Association of Zoos and Aquaria calls for ambitious international biodiversity targets as the United Nations launches the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration

Amsterdam 7 June 2021: The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria ([EAZA](#)), the world's largest regional zoo and aquarium association and a major contributor to the [United for Biodiversity global coalition](#), welcomes the launch of the [United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#) announced on World Environment Day 5 June. The Decade aims to restore and protect ecosystems that are vital for the health of the planet – an urgent task that needs every community to step up and demand action from legislators, industry and themselves; and with 140 million visits annually, EAZA Members are ideally placed to help their local communities take part in this vital work.

Ecosystems are the natural habitats of the plants and animals that maintain life on earth, and as we have seen over the past 18 months, human interference in natural spaces can have devastating consequences for us as well. Without healthy ecosystems, it is impossible to carry out effective conservation of animal species and a decline in the diversity of life on earth is inevitable.

Over the same 18-month period, **more than 100 EAZA Members have joined the United for Biodiversity coalition**, a group of some of the most visited and influential science engagement organisations convened by the European Commission to demand a high level of ambition at the first of the Decade's most significant events: the Convention on Biological Diversity's Conference of the Parties (CBD COP), to be held in October in China, will define the approach of world governments to the biodiversity crisis. Along with some of the world's best known museums, botanical gardens, universities and other organisations, EAZA and its Members aim to keep up the pressure on those governments to take the action we need to avoid catastrophic declines in wildlife over the coming years, and the terrible consequences this may bring to our own societies.

We urge Parties to the Conference to establish a meaningful framework for biodiversity protection to accompany the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, so that by 2050 biodiversity decline has been halted and species are beginning to recover in their natural habitats. As community centres for public engagement on the environment, we also urge our local governments to take targeted action to protect habitats closer to home and to do their part in asking national and international governmental bodies to do what needs to be done.

The time to act is now – as the global pandemic has shown us, animals need their own space to live without interference from people, and the CBD Framework must commit national governments to ensuring that nature is not sacrificed for short term economic gain. Nature needs our help: we can't afford to let it down.

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